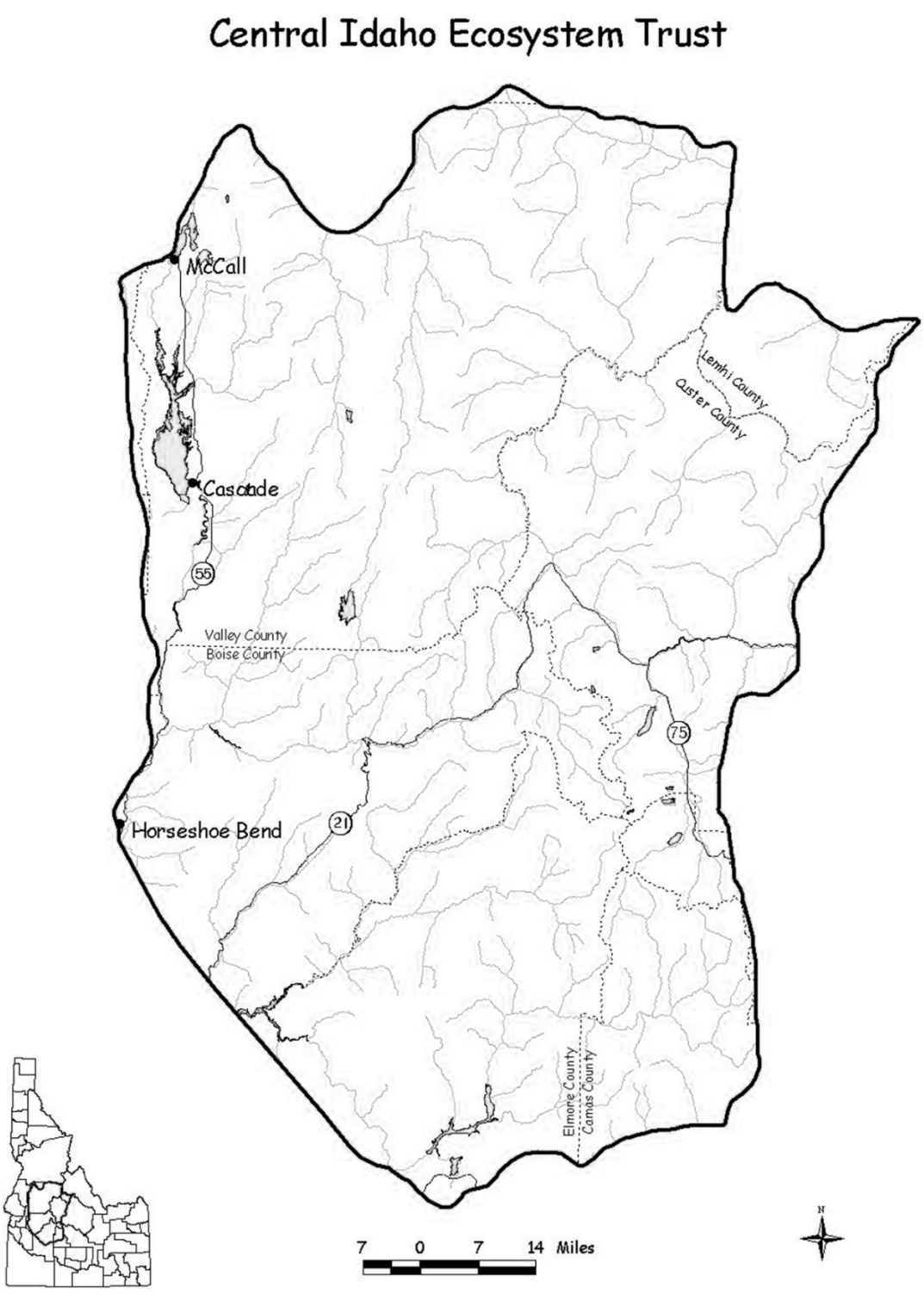
The Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust

Submitted to Idaho Federal Lands Task Force Group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INTRODUCTION

The Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust (CIET) is an example of an alternative method of managing federal lands that integrates the ecological, social and economic objectives in natural resource management. This project would use a trust law framework. Trustees would provide management oversight; a majority of the trustees would represent national interests. The key to land management is an Ecosystem Diversity Matrix, a model comprised of 143 combinations of vegetation habitat types and growth stages called ecological land units (ELUs). These provide area-specific goals for management and can be related to species' needs and social and economic concerns. The lands would be managed to provide revenue, net of operating costs, for the beneficiaries each year, generated in a manner that recognizes public values and is sustainable over the long term. Trust beneficiaries would represent local government, fish and wildlife interests, recreational interests, and ecological interests.

Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust

Area: 5.8 million acres; all of the Boise National Forest and parts of the Payette, Sawtooth, Salmon and Challis National Forests

Goal: Restore vegetation to desired ecological conditions while meeting social needs within an economically-oriented management framework.

The ecological needs in our National Forest are great. Many of the uses of the forest and the needed improvements on the landscape are not receiving the attention necessary to sustain a healthy ecosystem. The reasons are many: from questioning the definition of ecosystem management and how it is applied on the ground, to the many conflicting laws and regulations. The lack of agreement over how to manage our national forests has caused loss of early successional habitat for key wildlife species, increase of the wildfire hazard throughout large portions of the forest, and negative impact on many communities dependent on a healthy, viable ecosystem in this region.

The project area has had many large wildfires. The northern end of the project area in the Payette National Forest has experienced many crown fires that kill the trees but have little to no consumption of the fuels. These trees fall over and create tremendous fuel loads contributing to intense second burns. The second burns are very hot and tend to "cook" the soil, reducing moisture uptake and exposing areas to extensive erosion due to rain on snow events on these highly erosive Batholith soils. The areas of fallen timber are poor choices for planting or regeneration activities since they are at high risk for subsequent fire activity. The Boise National Forest, further south, has had many stand-replacing fires, which, due to the drier conditions, damage growth and soils and remove the fuels in many of the first burns.

The management of our public lands in the past had been by the principles of "multiple use." Since the 1970's, public land management has moved away from

commodity production. A new direction has been approached using ecosystem management based on ecosystem diversity and landscape-type assessments with management themes. Strategies that address the ecological objectives of ecosystem management are fundamental in accomplishing a goal. Appropriate methods can be confusing and controversial and may only address one of the three main objectives, which are ecological, economic, and social. The historical range of variability strategy is an example of one philosophy that is conceptually accepted by many. Under this philosophy, forest ecosystems would work toward a "historical range of variability." This is a reference to guide management.

The historical range of variability (HRV) can be a goal to begin and assess the results of activities, but with the understanding that the human element of today's realities are not always integrated into the picture when just the HRV is used.

The management of our public lands requires broader boundaries, using landscape strategies encompassing large enough areas to meet the needs of wildlife, vegetative management, water quality, and human uses within the entire ecosystem. When dealing with the whole ecosystem, the needs of all that live in and use the forest can be provided.

Providing an ecosystem management process that describes landscape units can be used to meet the ecological needs, social concerns, and economic benefits. Through implementation these activities will lead to a healthier ecosystem that directs management toward wildlife needs, clean water, recreational use, and community stability. Public involvement will encourage education and a better understanding of what is necessary to implement these complex management tools on public lands.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

CIET demonstration project located in Central Idaho, encompasses approximately 5.8 million acres and extends 180 miles north to south and approximately 100 miles east to west. The area covers all of the Boise National Forest and portions of four other National Forests as well as state and private lands. The four surrounding National Forests that are contiguous with the Boise are the Payette, Salmon, Challis, and Sawtooth National Forest. The Payette National Forest is on the north end of the project area and primarily encompasses the McCall and Krassel Districts and does not including the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The east and south side of this area is made up of primarily wilderness and national recreational areas providing rafting, hiking, camping, and many other outdoor activities.

This area is sufficiently large enough to contain viable populations of nearly all the native species in the ecosystem with a large cross section of habitats. The area can address water quality and wildlife habitat within landscapes and can be monitored for a variety of needs and considerations that have been recognized as requiring attention.

The management alternative recommended on the CIET is the trust model. The trust model is a well-established process used in many western states. In the West today,

about 50 million acres of land are managed under this system for the benefit of the state's public schools, colleges, prisons, state hospitals, and similar public institutions. While the CIET is a pilot demonstration project to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness on public lands, the trust model is a viable and tested mechanism that has been used for managing large acres of public lands for decades. One of the most current examples is the Baca Ranch Trust in New Mexico.

Scope

Ecosystem management has been accepted as the preferred approach for future land planning by most federal agencies. The definitions of ecosystem management vary, but most focus on a balance of ecological, economic and social objectives. How to implement the ecological objectives challenges land managers to develop new methodologies.

Federal agencies have generally been perceived as leaders in the implementation of ecosystem management. The effectiveness of implementation, however, has been hampered by significant barriers and lawsuits used by interest groups to inhibit or restrict activities that are needed to improve the forest condition. The trust mechanism is a tool to resolve conflicts and guide management of our public lands. With public participation, clear goals can be identified for meeting ecological and management objectives. The combination of using a new set of decision-making tools to manage federal lands, plus incorporating new science and processes is an opportunity to move ahead while proactively addressing the needs of the ecosystem.

MAGNITUDE OF THE PROPOSAL

The management of approximately five million acres of the CIET demonstration project will require the present Forest Service personnel plus support from universities, industry, and local communities. The implementation of Ecosystem Management has been discussed, reviewed, and studied. The CIET project is an opportunity to use the tools we have and to move this discussion to reality. In 1994, a voluntary group comprised of the US Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Idaho Department of Lands, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the University of Idaho, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and industry, proposed a partnership for evaluating ecosystem management at a landscape scale. The group, using the Southern Idaho Batholith Landscape, which is the CIET project area, developed a method of categorizing land by habitat types.

To categorize land types and evaluate landscape changes over time, the group implemented a data gathering process. A collaborative process for reviewing both proposed landscape alternatives and the changes over time was evaluated. This process required a description of the historical disturbances that occurred across the landscape, thus providing the natural history of the area and the conditions to which native species have adapted. The group was then able to model and estimate historical stand conditions for landscape planning purposes. The categorization of land by habitat types and stages

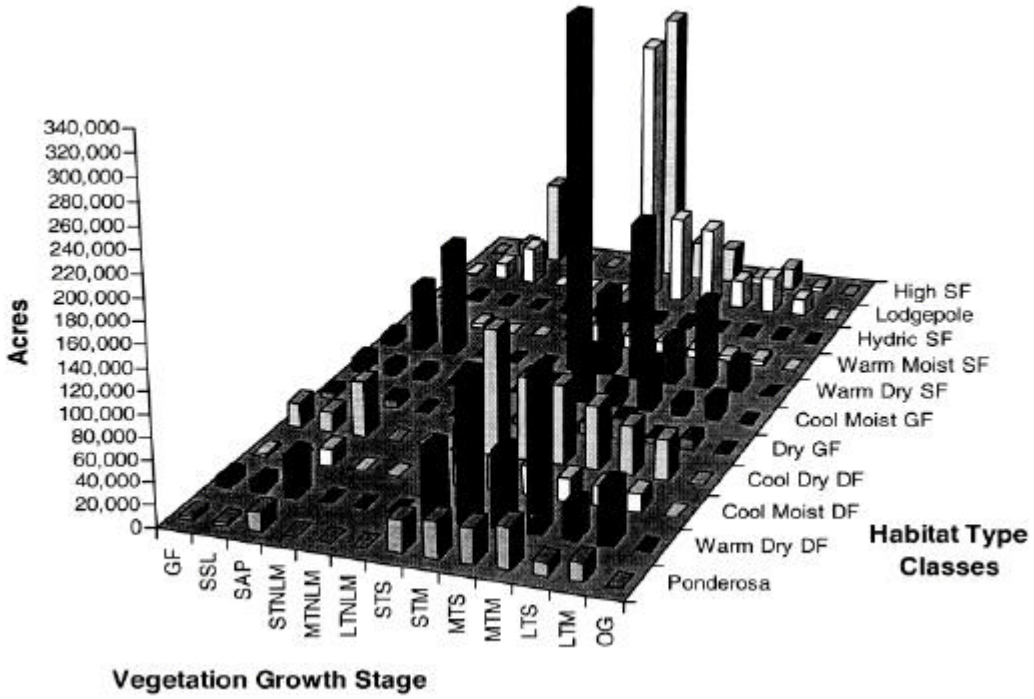
is termed the "Ecosystem Diversity Matrix." This makes it possible to identify specific habitats and stages in their growth. The combination of habitat types and growth stage is termed an "ecological land unit" or ELU" (Haufler et. al., 1996).

It is the intersection of habitat types and growth stages that defines an entity that begins to be useful to land managers. These are termed "ecological land units" (ELUs).

	Habitat Type Class (*Function*)	
Vegetation Growth State (*Structure*)	Ecological Land Unit	

There are 143 separate ELUs that have been defined within the Southern Idaho Batholith landscape. Their wide range of ecological conditions becomes the basis for all evaluations of historical conditions, existing conditions, and desired future conditions.

A variety of sophisticated software tools allow these ecological land units to be both shown on maps as they actually exist (a "spatial" display) and in tabular form, i.e., how much of a particular ecological unit exists. Managers can readily know the location and total size of all 143 ecological units across the landscape.



The size in acres of the ELUs is illustrated by the relative height of the bars.

The 143 ecological units provide a coarse filter view, describing on-the-ground conditions in a relatively simple manner. ELUs can also be displayed "spatially," on a map showing where each exists on the ground.

While identifying each ecological unit is useful, the two key parameters for doing so—habitat type and growth stage—do not, alone, provide all the information necessary to use the ecological units to develop plans. More data is required.

Over the past several years, the Idaho Ecosystem Management Project conducted intense field sampling to gather the information that the definition of the ELUs, alone, would not provide. This entailed field collection of data on:

- Species composition of the overstory,
- Species composition and percent ground cover of dominant understory species,
- Horizontal cover of understory vegetation,
- The diameters, height, and distribution of both live and dead trees,
- Coarse woody debris on the ground,
- Canopy cover, and,
- Ground cover by biotic and abiotic components.

Such detail added to each ELU accomplishes two purposes. First, it allows the quantification of the value of the habitat quality for each of the species that might use a particular ELU. Second, it facilitates quantification of biodiversity across the entire landscape. Both are important to using the ecosystem diversity matrix as a tool for land management planning.

Each animal finds all or a portion of a particular ELU as important to meeting its needs for food, cover, or reproductive opportunities. Some attributes are absolutely vital, while others hold less importance to a particular species. By understanding the needs of the species and then tying those needs to the attributes of specific ELUs, one can predict what changes in the attributes of the ELU would make it more attractive to the specie in question.

This is important. For example, if managers know that white-crowned sparrows occur most frequently in dry sub-alpine fir habitat types in the seedling/sapling growth stage, then the consequences of their actions on that species can be predictable. Moreover, if more numbers of that specie are desirable or fewer of them are acceptable, then management decisions such as thinning treatments that might positively or negatively affect this habitat can be made accordingly.

At the landscape scale, the full component of information on each ELU and its contribution toward meeting the needs of the wildlife species associated with it allows one to determine what might be an "adequate ecological representation" (AER), within that landscape. The Idaho Ecosystem Management Project has defined "adequate ecological representation" as a distribution of inherent ecosystems of a size sufficient to

maintain viable populations of all native species dependent on those ecosystems (Haufler et. al., 1996).

("Adequate ecological representation" can be a management goal and is defined as "sufficient size and distribution of inherent ecosystems that maintains viable populations of all native communities and species" Haufler, 1994.)

As defined, AER is reached when there is enough of a specific ecological land unit available to meet 10% as a minimum amount of that ELU as it existed historically within the landscape and is a starting point for the evaluation. In even simpler terms, if the habitat needs of the wildlife species are met, then the species will be not only be present within the landscape but will also exist at a sustainable level. The system provides a goal to the level of management necessary to providing the habitat needs.

There are three important points. First, the ability to measure habitat needs for individual species in quantitative terms and then to be able to locate that habitat on the ground means that those who modify those habitat parameters will know what species will be affected and how much. Second, land managers can tailor their management practices to produce a desired effect for a particular species. Third, land managers can "trade" effects, to achieve desired results along with economic goals. Land managers can also be assured the needs of species across the landscape can be met by using a minimum historical level as a starting point for evaluation.

The Ecosystem Diversity Matrix describes vegetative growth stages and distribution across the landscape. Implementing an ecosystem management approach requires a process. A process to address what is needed would include: identifying the landscapes and describing their desired future appearances, including ecological, social and economic concerns, and monitoring. A Simplified Ecosystem Diversity Matrix populated with acres by ecological land unit would look like this.

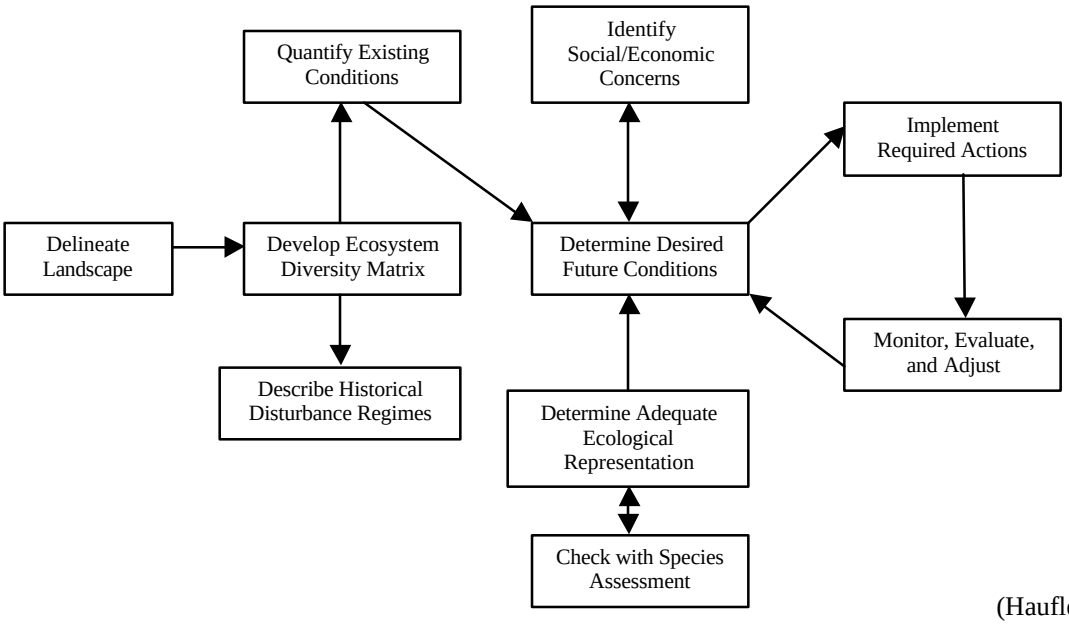
Simplified Ecosystem Diversity Matrix Populated with Acres by Ecological Land Unit

	Habitat Type Class			
Vegetative Growth Stage	Pine	Douglas-fir	Grand fir	Alpine fir
Seedling	100	100	500	
Sapling		100		
Small Tree		100	50	
Medium Tree		100		200
Old Growth		100	300	200
Total Acres	100	500	850	400

Ecosystem management is the integration of ecological, social, and economic objectives at the landscape levels. The management must address the conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem integrity while integrating the social and economic demands to the extent practical. A clear strategy for meeting the ecological objectives as well as the philosophical basis for this strategy is needed to reduce ambiguity that

surrounds specific issues. A process of implementing an ecosystem management approach may look like this flow chart.

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROCESS



(Haufler 1996)

COMMUNITY

The CIET project encompasses approximately five million acres of predominately ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir ecosystem which provides homes for fish and wildlife, fiber for wood and paper products, forage for cows and sheep, and an unlimited menu of year-round recreation opportunities. Living within and adjacent to the CIET project are 300,000 Idahoans who are within a one-hour drive of the Boise National Forest, which is the heart of the project area. There are over 30 communities that use this area for recreation and work, including Idaho's capital city located just south and west of the project area in Boise. The CIET project area is within the ceded area traditionally used by the Nez Perce Tribe. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe also uses the area for fishing and hunting. For centuries, the South Fork of the Salmon River has been used as a traditional fishing ground for salmon. The CIET area is used extensively for recreation and services associated with outdoor activities. It provides a sustainable fiber base for wood and paper products, as well as other commodities that are a major component of the rural communities found throughout the area.

Conclusions from the most recent forest plan monitoring reports for the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forest finds that a change is needed if an effective approach to responsible land and resource stewardship is to be implemented in the area. With the impacts of wildfire (20% of the Boise National Forest has burned in the last 10 years) and new scientific information about aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, a revision of the forest plans is in progress and scheduled for release in 2000. The new plan will

include the ecosystem diversity matrix process and will address large scale ecosystem management.

Ecosystem management issues have increased and need attention; more species and their habitats are at risk, and rural communities face uncertainties about natural resource flows from public lands. Included in the changes are the impacts of increased insect infestations and the unforeseen increases in recreational demands, which press personnel and budgets throughout the project area.

ECONOMY

The rural communities depend heavily on the resource activities of the National Forest. The economy of the CIET is made up of a combination of small rural communities throughout the CIET project area with a few larger cities and communities. Jobs generated from timber harvest, reforestation, recreation, and restoration work are the base incomes that support other businesses in these communities. The larger cities and communities are less dependent on the activities of the National Forest for work but are active users of the forest for camping, hunting, skiing, and other recreational uses. The health of the forest is directly tied to the health of many of the businesses in the area and reaches past the issue of how much we should harvest or how much should we protect. Rather the questions is, "Is the overall system sustainable?" (Center for International Forestry Research, North American Test of Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forestry, 1999).

ENVIRONMENT

The ecological conditions have been documented and described by the Idaho Ecosystem Management Project and the Forest Service, Southwest Idaho Ecogroup, Intermountain region. Southwest Idaho Ecogroup is made up of the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests. This group hosted an independent review of various sets of criteria and indicators of sustainable forestry during 1998. The review was conducted under The Center for International Forestry (CIFOR) and by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Inventorying and Monitoring Institute. This review constitutes CIFOR's North American test of sustainable forest management and is the seventh worldwide CIFOR test. The project was conducted in southwestern Idaho.

The test was conducted to develop sets of locally appropriate criteria and indicators at the forest management level. Criteria and indicators are tools that can be used to conceptualize, evaluate, and implement sustainable forest management. The principal aim of the field test is to identify criteria and indicators that are objective, cost-effective, and relevant to the sustainable management of forests. The focus of the testing procedure was to identify the smallest number of criteria and indicators needed to reliably assess forest management in a cost-effective manner. The CIFOR tests are unique in

testing the application of the criteria and indicators to the field, where key decisions are made.

The Boise National Forest was at the heart of the study area. Other key cooperating land management organizations were the Boise Cascade Corporation and the Idaho Department of Lands. The project team was selected from a wide range of disciplines found throughout the United State, Canada, and Mexico:

- three ecologists;
- one social scientist;
- one economist;
- three forest managers; and
- one forest geneticist.

Additional specialists included a carbon biochemist, an anthropologist, a systems ecologist, and a forest ecologist. The report summarizing this test of criteria and indicators (*Synopsis of FY 1998-99 Forest Plan Monitoring*) is available from the Boise National Forest.

There are three primary levels or scales of monitoring. The first level of monitoring and evaluation is for project level analyses such as evaluating implementation of an individual timber sale or trail construction project. The second level is monitoring and evaluation of individual resources at the mid (forest) scale. The third level is broad-scale (ecogroup) monitoring to support forest plan revision. The emphasis of monitoring in support of forest plan revision is being conducted at the mid and broad scale.

Assessment of properly functioning condition (PFC) was the primary evaluation activity in 1998-99 to support forest plan revision for the ecogroup.

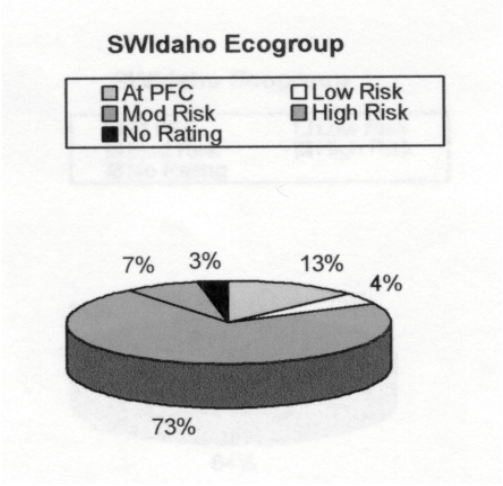
> *Properly Functioning Condition: Ecosystems at any temporal or spatial scale are in properly functioning condition when they are dynamic and resilient to disturbances to structure, composition, and processes of their biological or physical components.*

It is vital that the current condition of our biological and physical ecosystem elements are well understood and described at the management area level (50,000 acres to 250,000 acres) for development of appropriate management direction. PFC is a major anchor point for developing goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines necessary to address changes needed in management direction in order to achieve desired future conditions. The PFC assessment was completed for each of the ecogroup's 55 management areas at the district ranger level on all three national forests.

Each subject area was ranked for each management area. The specialists determined at what level a subject area was ranked. The ranking choices were 1) at PFC, 2) low risk, 3) moderate risk, 4) high risk, 5) not functioning.

Risk: situations in which outcome is not certain, but the chance of system degradation beyond the point of resiliency and sustainability can be estimated.
The following is a summary of the PFC results for the Ecogroup. The percentage figures are accurate to ? one percent and summarize the percent of management areas evaluated for each PFC category. The charts do not demonstrate the percent of acres functioning at PFC or take into account the size of the subject area.

The following example may help when interpreting the charts. Water quality integrity, aquatic habitat, and riparian areas were evaluated in the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup, and thirteen percent of the management areas evaluated on these forests are in a properly functioning condition. This is only one example. The Southwest Idaho Ecogroup evaluated many different criteria ranging from habitat quality to sediment deposition into streams. The chart provides an estimate of the percent of the management area that is properly functioning and the percent that is at some level of risk.



Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Potential Vegetation Category Ratings

Potential Vegetation Group	Ecogroup				Boise Forest				Payette Forest				Sawtooth Forest			
	Risk Level (Percent)															
Forested Vegetation	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**
Pinion/Juniper	0	20	20	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	60
Aspen	13	26	26	35	0	0	80	20	0	0	0	0	17	33	11	39
Dry Ponderosa Pine	14	21	36	39	0	22	33	44	40	20	40	0	0	0	0	0
Warm Dry Doug-fir	0	5	30	65	0	0	13	87	0	34	66	0	0	0	100	0
Cool Moist Doug-fir	8	46	31	15	10	40	30	20	0	66	34	0	0	0	0	0
Cool Dry Doug-fir	13	22	44	22	0	33	47	20	75	25	0	0	8	8	54	31
Dry Grand Fir	0	18	35	47	0	0	43	57	0	30	30	40	0	0	0	0
Cool Moist Grand Fir	10	35	20	35	0	14	14	71	15	47	23	15	0	0	0	0
Warm Dry Subalpine Fir	19	57	21	2	22	78	0	0	80	20	0	0	0	47	47	5
Warm Moist Subalpine Fir	81	19	0	0	0	100	0	0	93	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hydric Subalpine Fir	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persistent Lodgepole Pine	26	26	26	22	13	25	0	63	0	0	100	0	38	31	31	0
High Elevation Subalpine Fir	77	6	16	0	63	6	31	0	80	0	0	0	0	100	0	0
	Risk Level (Percent)															
Shrublands & Grasslands	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**	**At PFC**	**Low**	**Mod**	**High**
Low Sagebrush	47	47	6	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	40	53	7	0
Mountain Big Sagebrush	31	38	23	8	67	13	7	13	50	25	25	0	0	60	35	5
Wyoming Big Sagebrush	0	87	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	0	13
Big Basin Sagebrush	0	40	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	30	30
Bitterbrush	0	0	86	14	0	0	80	20	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0
Perennial Grass	24	46	13	17	38	23	8	31	17	50	13	0	0	100	0	0
Perennial Grass Montaine	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
Montaine Shrub	70	17	13	0	81	13	6	0	75	0	25	0	50	30	20	0
Alpine Meadow	22	51	17	11	29	17	0	0	67	33	0	0	0	38	38	25

The Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests conducted social and economic data collection in 1998-99 to support the forest plan revision. In addition to laws and regulations, the revision effort is shaped by the evolving thinking of the important role of social and economic analysis in forest planning. The social and economic analysis, still underway, addresses two recent works:

Guidelines for Conducting Social Assessments Within a Human Dimensions Framework developed by the National Forest social scientists and researchers and university social scientists (Bright, et al, 1998). *Sustaining the People's Land: Recommendations for Stewardship of the National Forests and Grasslands into the next Century* (Committee of Scientists, 1999).

The data collected to date will be summarized in the assessment by the following categories:

- National/international settings and issues, including Native American tribes;
- Regional issues, as reflected by the information gathered through the ICBEMP;
- Socio-economic characteristics and changes in Idaho;
- Socio-economic characteristics and changes in affected counties; and
- Socio-economic characteristics and recent changes in affected communities.

Assessing the information listed above builds on the extensive work of scientists from the ICBEMP project and the following sources:

--economic profiles of selected communities throughout the ecogroup;
--interviews with local elected officials (county commissioners and mayors);
--community self-assessment and profiles;
--community profiles developed by the State of Idaho and Native American governments; and
--public comments from scoping conducted in the spring of 1997.

The PFC system is similar to the Idaho Ecosystem Management Project, and the data is important for guiding management to key species and habitats. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) exists between the southwest Idaho Ecogroup and the Idaho Ecosystem Management Project that developed the Ecosystem Diversity Matrix cooperatively. The Southwest Ecogroup has different density classes and growth stages and has made reference to using a 20% of the maximum amount of an Ecological Land Unit as historically found, where the Idaho Ecosystem project identifies 10% as a starting point for the evaluation. Either process describes a goal by acres or by land class and deals with the current situation. Both processes have an overview of the relationship between commodity production and the natural environment. A combination of two processes can be used to identify an ecological goal and provide an objective for developing a plan that meets the requirements for ecosystem sustainability. This provides a documented process to be used as a demonstration within the CIET project.

PILOT PROJECT DETAILS

Development of the trust pilot project requires that the elements are delineated between the trust, as well as the trustees and trust managers. It also requires an outline of the management process and fiscal aspects of the organization.

The Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust would be created through a trust instrument, executed by the settlor of the trust, the US Congress. The trust instrument is proposed in the legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President, setting aside a specific National Forest(s) and establishing the intent of the trust, the trustees, the beneficiaries, as well as the structure for trust management.

The CIET must have an expression of intent clearly stating the goal of the pilot project. Multiple use is too ambiguous an expression. A recommendation for an expression of intent be codified in the pilot project:

> *The trustees shall manage these public lands to provide revenue, net of operating costs, for the beneficiaries each year, generated in a manner that recognizes public values and is sustainable over the long term. The beneficiaries are the public, both national and local, that use the National Forest, local education, and communities whose involvement in management of these lands is critical to meeting public needs.*

The clarity of this goal is paramount and establishes who is responsible, what they are to do, to whom they are accountable, and the period of the responsibility. It establishes a firm foundation for decision-making on the part of the trustees and trust managers. It makes trustees and managers accountable to the beneficiaries.

Designation of beneficiaries is a critical element of the CIET, not only because of the distribution of revenues from the management of federal land management activities, but also because the selection of appropriate beneficiaries will foster creative tension to ensure different benefits are balanced by the trustees.

Legislation specified in the Tables recommends that beneficiaries represent local county government, fish and wildlife interests, and recreational interests. These beneficiaries have interests in the local economic considerations of trust land management, the ecological features of the trust landscape, such as water quality and wildlife habitat, as well as the use of, and access to, the trust lands for recreation. Each beneficiary also has an interest in monetary returns because these funds help support local government, on-the-ground fish and wildlife habitat improvements, and maintenance and improvement of recreation resources. At the same time, each has an interest in maintaining the viability of the land base since that perpetuates the capacity of the trust to support the interests of each beneficiary in the long term.

The beneficiaries representing local government would be the school and road districts in the county(s) where the pilot project is located. Including these entities as beneficiaries will enable them to participate in the trust operations.

The beneficiary representing public interests in fish and wildlife would be the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. Members of this commission are appointed by the Governor of Idaho and confirmed by the State Senate. They hire the Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, who, in turn, directs the operations of the department in carrying out its responsibilities as caretaker of fish and wildlife populations and habitat in the state.

The beneficiary representing public interests in recreational use of federally administered lands would be the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board. The members of the Parks and Recreation Board are appointed by the Governor in the same manner as the Fish and Game Commission. They serve the same capacity in relation to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, the agency responsible for the management of Idaho's 25 state parks.

The CIET includes federal property within the boundaries of five national forest(s) for this pilot project. The trust property management activities that generate revenues will only occur on those "general use" areas of the national forests that are designated in the current land and resource management plan(s) for the selected national forest(s). Because of the many issues associated with undeveloped or roadless lands in Idaho's national forests, we suggest that those areas recommended as additions to the

National Wilderness Preservation System in current national forest land and resource management plans be excluded from consideration as producing revenue from resource commodity use. Subject to the trust decision process and public involvement, other roadless areas could be managed. Motorized recreation would continue in accordance with the management plan in place on undeveloped or roadless lands outside wilderness areas.

Recreational resources within the pilot project areas may be specified in the trust instrument as recreation revenue-producing assets, but these lands would not be used as commodity-producing assets.

Trust Components

Designation of trustees will be conducted so that national as well as local interests are represented. A seven-member board of trustees is recommended.

Four of the trustees would be appointed by the Governor of Idaho. The Governor serves as Chairman of the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners, the constitutional body responsible for overseeing the management of Idaho's 2,466,000 acres of trust land. In this capacity the Governor has knowledge, experience, and insight in the activities of an operating trust. The Governor shall elect to name three members of the State Land Board as trustees, since these individuals also have working knowledge of trust land management. This would provide consistency between the management of state and federal lands within or adjacent to the pilot project area.

The other three trustees will be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture with the advice of the Governor of Idaho. These trustees could be prominent national leaders whose efforts would be focused on the sustainable development of natural resources, and should represent national interests in the use of federal lands for a variety of purposes.

Trustees look after the integrity of the trust and the national interest in managing the trust assets. Trustees approve management plans, can decide appeals, and ensure that the needs of the beneficiaries are met. Trustees also appoint the Local Advisory Council.

The current National Forest supervisor for the lands included in the trust would be the trust manager. The National Forest personnel and management structure on the forest would remain in place. This takes advantage of the existing infrastructure, technical, and support capabilities of the Forest Service. It is possible that some adjustment in the type of skills represented on the forest would take place as the mission of the forest changed under the trust concept. The manager and staff would refocus their management activities in light of the new mission; some uncertainty and rough spots early in the pilot project would be expected. National Forest personnel are, however, capable and committed individuals and the transition should be accomplished with minimal problems.

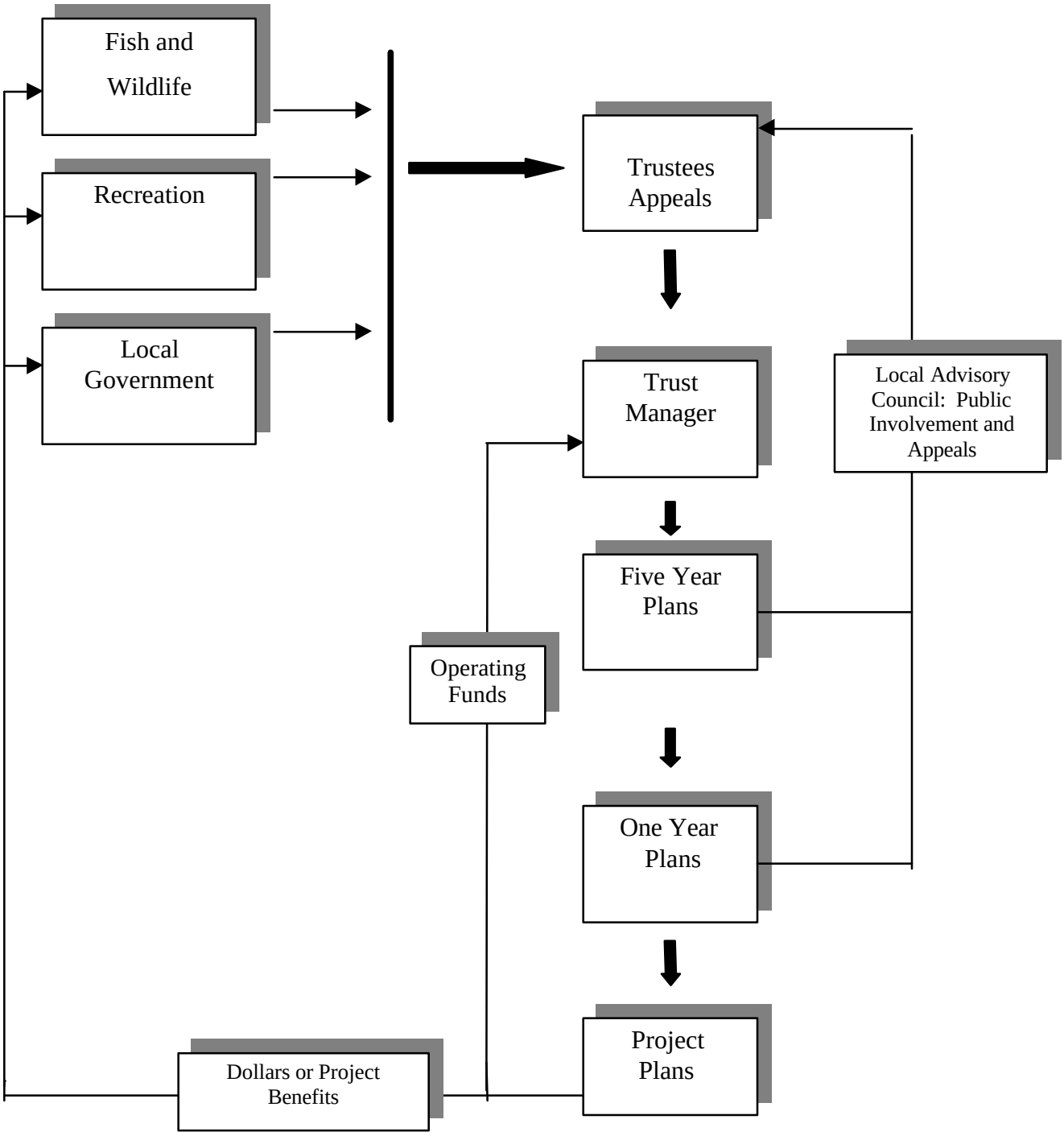
The trust manager will report to the trustees, implements their policies, and ensure that they are consistently applied through each plan and project. The manager will design

and implement projects in accordance with the plans, and is responsible for all planning and directing on-the-ground operations of trust land management.

The management system for the CIET is outlined on the following pages. The trustees provide oversight and broad policy direction consistent with the purpose of the trust. On-the-ground land and resource management decisions are made by the trust manager. The trustees have authority to override the decisions of the trust manager if they believe it to be in the best interests of the beneficiaries. The trustees also serve as the final decision-making authority for public appeals of decisions made by the trust manager.

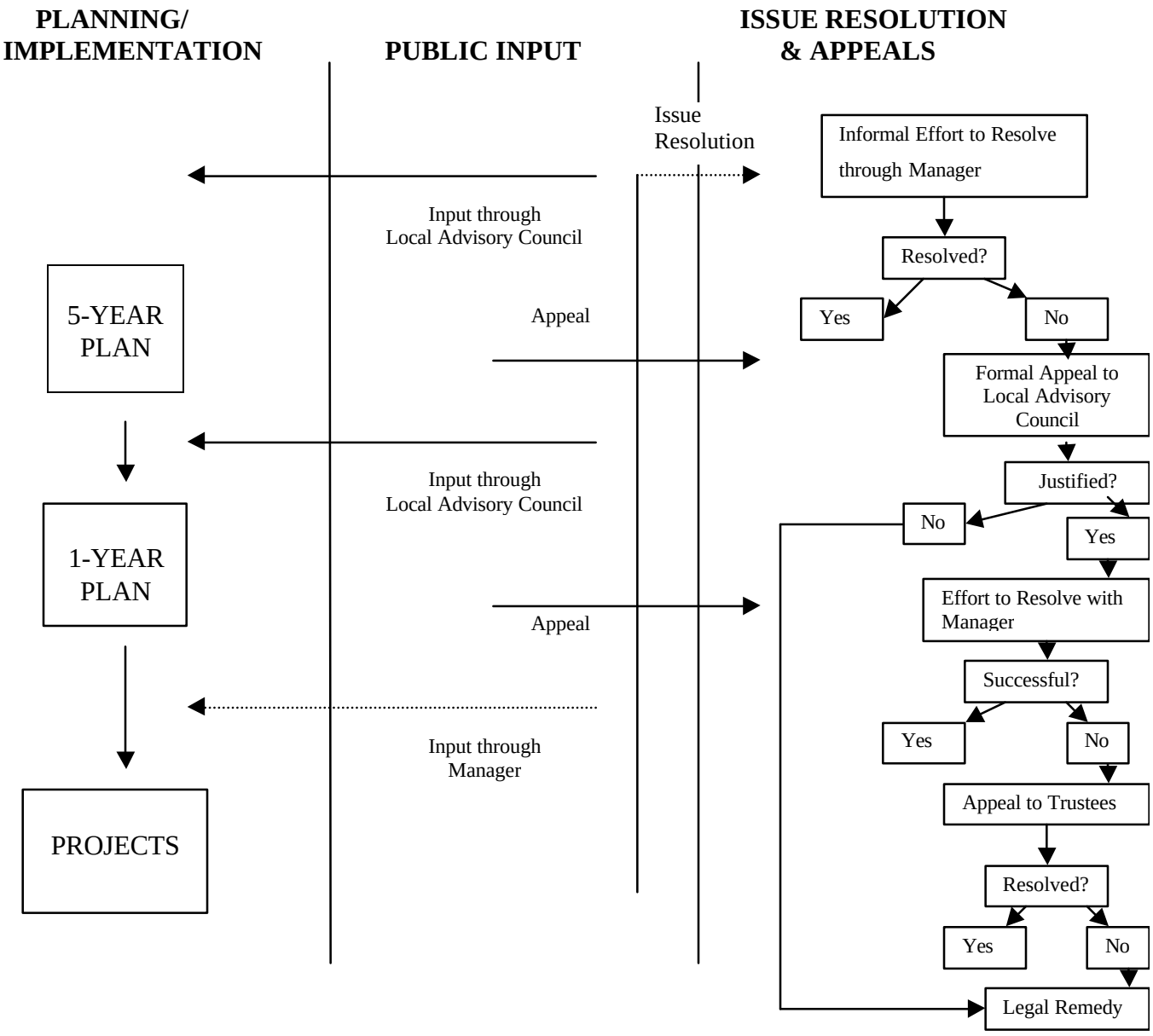
The trust manager will be assisted by the Local Advisory Council. This council, appointed by the trustees, will serve as a point of local contact for the trust manager. Its purpose will be to inform the manager of local needs and concerns and to act as a sounding board for the manager in the decision-making process. The Local Advisory Council will manage public involvement, hear first formal appeal, and be involved in all phases of the planning process.

Management of the Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust



Management Planning and Public Involvement

TRUST PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS[?]



[?] New Approaches for Managing Federally Administered Lands, July 1998

The planning and public involvement process outlined in the previous flow chart will guide the operations of the CIET Trust. The foundation of this process is a five-year plan. Development of this plan will require examination of alternatives for land allocations and how to meet local economic and environmental needs. This plan will be based on a sound inventory of land and resources. It will define the broad objectives of land management activities and the levels of production expected from the trust assets.

Each five-year plan will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement. Public comment will be solicited during the planning process. The Local Advisory Council will oversee the public comment collection and analysis process and will ensure that the comments are considered and accommodated as appropriate in the plan.

Administrative appeals will be allowed during the five-year planning process. The appeals will be managed by the Local Advisory Council. Appeals will be restricted, however, to those individuals or organizations who have availed themselves of the opportunities for public involvement. An effort will initially be made to resolve the appeals informally with the trust manager. Should that effort fail, the appeal will be advanced through the Local Advisory Council, with the trustees having the ultimate appeal authority. Appellants dissatisfied with the administrative process will retain their rights to seek a remedy through the legal system.

Within the broad guidance of the five-year plan, the trust manager, with input from the Local Advisory Council, will develop a one-year plan. This plan will list the specific on-the-ground projects designed to meet the five-year plan objectives for the coming year. Each one-year plan will be accompanied by an Environmental Assessment. As with the five-year plan, public comment will be solicited by the Local Advisory Council during the one-year planning process. The administrative appeal process for the one-year plan is the same as that for the five-year plan. On-the-ground projects identified in the one-year plan are not appealable. The opportunity still exists for interested parties to express their concerns and recommendations to the trust manager or Local Advisory Council on an informal basis regarding the design or implementation of any individual project. Those individuals who filed appeals during the five-year or one-year planning process, saw them through the administrative process, and remained dissatisfied could still avail themselves of the judicial process within the confines of the congressional action establishing the CIET.

This approach to planning should result in a more meaningful plan than those produced under the current National Forest Management Act. The planning horizon is more realistic, and the link between the broad plan and on-the-ground actions is shorter.

The projects are designed to meet all standards, which can be improved through site-specific analysis. Consultation with the regulatory agencies will address species protection. Projects not listed on the one-year plan, but which for some reason the trust manager proposes to accomplish in a particular year (i.e. wildfire damage), would have to be preceded by an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment and

would be subject to the same public involvement requirements and administrative appeal processes as those in the planning process.

FISCAL PROCESSES

One of the principles of resource management is that a long-term outlook is necessary to effectively plan and manage resources. A stable source of funding is therefore necessary to support on-the-ground management activities.

The pilot project will require the federal treasury to provide funding under the current activities. The management of activities will require a stable funding level throughout the pilot project period.

During the pilot project period, any revenues generated from management of the trust assets would be distributed as shown on the flow chart, "Trust Finance and Cash Flow Structure." Revenue from renewable resources, such as timber and grazing, would be deposited into a management account. Revenue from non-renewable resources, such as minerals, would also be deposited into the management account. This fund would be invested within specified guidelines, and the revenue produced through the investment would also be deposited into the management account.

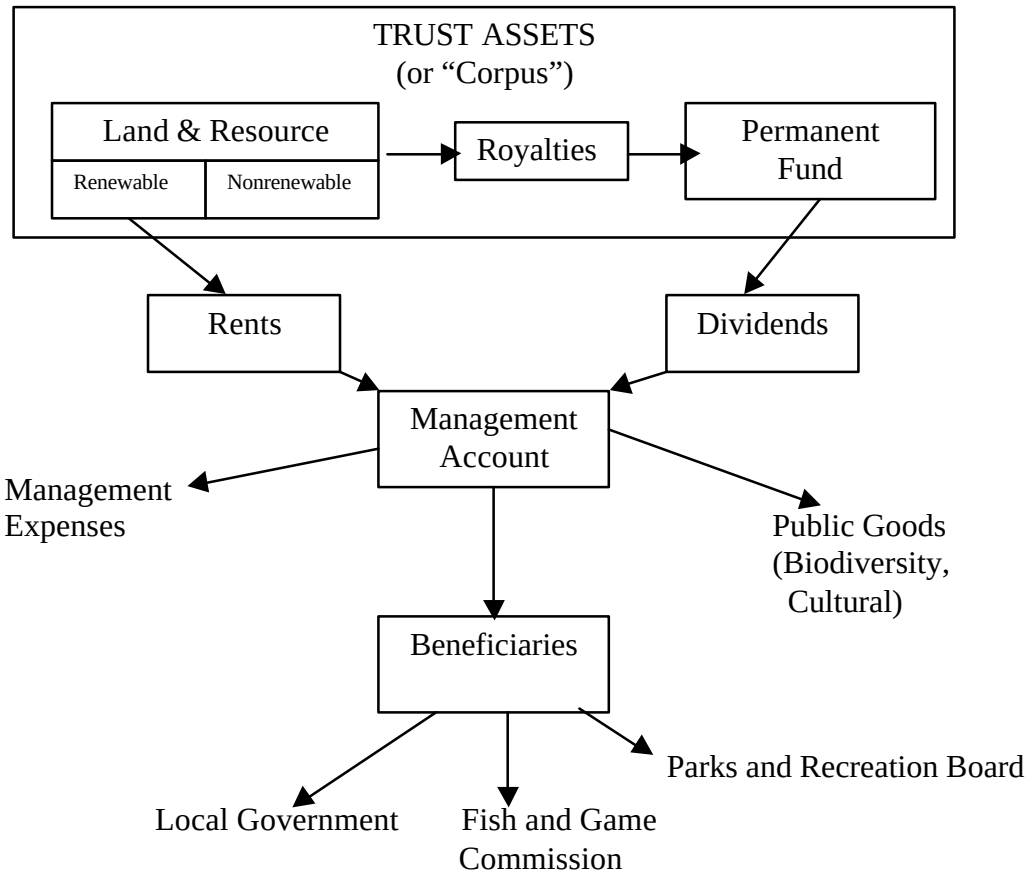
The management expenses of the trust would be paid from a combination of federal appropriations and revenues. A management contingency account would be established to cover unforeseen events and as a cushion against cash flow problems. Management expenses and public goods payments will be paid prior to other distributions. The proceeds of the trust will also fund the costs of maintaining public goods, such as cultural and archaeological sites and biodiversity, that have public value but that do not have a market value, or the protection of which is not a responsibility of one of the beneficiaries. Protection of these values would still be the responsibility of the trustees and the costs would be carried by trust revenues or federal appropriations.

Revenues remaining after funding operations will be deposited in an account each year for the beneficiaries. This account will be managed to provide reasonable, long-term payments to the beneficiaries. The trustees will determine the amount distributed each year. The trustees will also be allowed to retain portions of this account as a hedge against periods of low cash flow. There will likely be a backlog of road and trail maintenance, wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, ecological restoration, and recreation resource development work that will absorb any surplus net revenues for at least five years.

Continued federal funding will be necessary is wildland fire control in the pilot project area. Idaho Code requires that forest landowners pay the state $0.45 per acre to help fund the cost of having adequate resources available to fight fire. This figure represents about half of actual fire preparedness-costs. It is expected that the federal government would continue to meet its landowner obligations and contribute this amount each year. The remaining preparedness costs would be borne as an administrative cost to

the trust. It is also expected that the federal government will provide for fire suppression activities to cover costs of wildfire events in the pilot project area as is presently being funded.

Trust Finance and Cash Flow Structure



The CIET project structure outlined above meets functional objectives. The clarity of the mission provides certainty on the decision-making process. This, accompanied by the Local Advisory Council and the makeup of the trustees, will help stabilize resource-dependent communities. The planning process is formalized and incorporates public involvement. The agency budget would be stabilized through trust revenues. Finally, water quality and wildlife would be protected through application of existing laws, the beneficiary and public goods features of the trust, and long-term intention of the trust settlor. The trust, therefore, meets the qualifications set for this alternative.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE SUMMARIES

Existing Proforma Boise National Forest

The budget of the Boise National Forest has been constantly changing and the numbers used reflect the final 2000 budget.

Revenues generated from land management operations
1996-1999 Average Treatment Acres and Values

Timberland 14,883 acres treated	$8,640,000	
Recreation Fees	$260,000	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	---	
TOTAL	$8,900,000	$8,900,000

Expenses Projected for Operations 2000

Timberlands		
Fire	$4,391,000	
Planning	$427,000	
Timber Sales	$5,789,000	
Reforestation	$4,135,900	
Recreation	$1,979,000	
Minerals	$310,000	
Grazing	$472,000	
Heritage Resources	$130,000	
Wildlife	$715,000	
Noxious Weed Control	$40,000	
Soil & Water	$146,000	
Administration/Misc	$6,254,100	
TOTAL	$24,789,000	($24,789,000)

Total revenues available less expenses projected for operations	($15,889,000)

The Boise National Forest budget for 2000 is 12% less than the 1997-1999 average. Recreational fees include special use for campgrounds, ski areas, resorts, and river use. Grazing fees are minimal. Watershed restoration activities are included in the roads and soil and water budgets.

Existing Proforma Payette National Forest McCall and Krassel Districts.

Recently these districts have been administratively combined with New Meadows district and the data has been proportioned to reflect the activities in the specific districts in the project area.

Revenues generated from land management operations
1997-1999 Average Treatment Acres and Values

Timberland 500 acres treated	$965,000	
Recreation Fees	$20,000	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	$5,000	
TOTAL	$990,000	$990,000

Expense for Operations 1999

Timberlands		
Fire	$661,981	
Planning	$75,970	
Timber Sales	$482,377	
Reforestation	---	
Recreation	$189,598	
Minerals	$120,235	
Grazing	$107,456	
Heritage Resources	---	
Wildlife	$124,472	
Noxious Weed Control	$12,000	
Soil & Water	$247,048	
Administration/Misc	$529,722	
TOTAL	$2,550,859	($2,550,859)

Total revenues available less expense for operations	($1,560,859)

The McCall and Krassel budgets are approximately 11 percent of the Payette National Forest budget. Watershed restoration on the Payette National Forest consists of road obliteration, road decommissioning, reconstruction and soil stabilization. The majority of roadless areas on the Payette National Forest are on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts.

Existing Proformas for the Sawtooth, Challis and Salmon National Forests

The existing Proformas for the Sawtooth, Challis and Salmon National Forests will be combined using the total cost for the Sawtooth National Forest as a representative unit. All three forests are heavily involved in recreation. The Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and the Sawtooth National Recreation areas make up the majority of the lands within the project area. The Salmon National Forest has only a small portion of their forest in the project area.

Revenues generated from land management operations
1998-1999 Average Treatment Acres and Values

Timberland 942 acres treated	$661,500	
Recreation Fees (1991-1995)	$368,775	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	---	
TOTAL	$1,030,275	$1,030,275

Expenses for Operations 1999

Timberlands		
Fire	$2,030,000	
Planning	$823,680	
Timber Sales	$554,600	
Reforestation & Vegetation Mgt	$437,200	
Recreation	$2,269,850	
Minerals	$296,400	
Grazing	$429,700	
Heritage Resources	$83,800	
Wildlife	$605,400	
Noxious Weed Control	$40,000	
Roads & Maintenance	$1,517,000	
Soil & Water	$990,100	
Administration/Misc	$3,577,039	
TOTAL	$13,654,769	($13,654,769)

Total revenues available less expense for operations	($12,624,494)

The Sawtooth and Challis National Forest are primarily a higher elevation wilderness and recreational use forest. Recreation fees are generated from campgrounds and special use activities throughout the area. Grazing fees and mineral revenues are minimal in the project area.

Existing Proforma for the five National Forests combined for the Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust project area.

Revenues generated from land management operations
1996-1999 Average Treatment Acres

Timberland 16,325 acres treated	$10,266,500	
Recreation Fees	$648,775	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	$5,000	
TOTAL	$10,920,275	$10,920,275

Expense for Operations 1999

Timberlands		
Fire	$7,082,981	
Planning	$1,326,650	
Timber Sales	$6,825,977	
Reforestation	$4,573,100	
Recreation	$4,438,448	
Minerals	$726,635	
Grazing	$1,009,156	
Heritage Resources	$213,800	
Wildlife	$1,444,872	
Noxious Weed Control	$92,000	
Roads and Maintenance	$3,914,000	
Soil & Water	$1,383,148	
Administration/Misc	$7,963,861	
TOTAL	$40,994,628	($40,994,628)

Total Revenues Available less cash used for operations	($30,074,353)

Potential Pilot Proforma

The potential Pilot Porforma are provided as an example of the activities that could be implemented to meet ecological sustainable management. The potential pilot proforma for the five National Forests in the CIET project proposes for an area of approximately 2.5 million acres of suitable lands a potential treatment area of 18,140 acres, which could be primarily generated by the Boise and Payette National Forests.

Revenues generated from land management operations
PILOT Proforma

Timberland 18,140 treated acres*	$11,622,000	
Recreation Fees	$648,775	
Minerals	---	
Grazing fees	$5,000	
TOTAL	$12,275,775	$12,275,775

Expense for Operations 1999 in Project Area

Timberlands		
Fire	$7,082,981	
Planning	$1,326,650	
Timber Sales	$6,825,977	
Reforestation	$4,573,100	
Recreation	$4,438,448	
Minerals	$726,635	
Grazing	$1,009,156	
Heritage Resources	$213,800	
Wildlife	$1,444,872	
Noxious Weed Control**	$184,000	
Roads and Maintenance	$3,914,000	
Soil & Water	$1,383,148	
Resource Monitoring	$398,193	
Administration/Misc	$7,565,668	
TOTAL	$41,086,628	($41,086,628)

Total revenues available less expense for operations	($28,810,853)

*The potential treatment acres are projections from each of the forests derived from the recent past activities and from discussions with the Supervisors Offices. Depending on management objectives and ecological restoration needs, this number of acres could be increased significantly.

**Noxious weed control has been doubled to address the increasing threat to native plants and habitats that noxious weeds impact throughout the five National Forests.

COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Economic

The budgets are administered very differently for each forest. Forests such as the Boise and Payette have a mix of projects, and the budget is spread over multiple activities. The forests with high recreational use and wilderness have increased budgets in recreation, roads, maintenance and administration.

The budget summary of the CIET project requires that all funding on the forest remain at or increase present levels. Budgets are decreasing (Boise National Forest has had a 12% budget reduction the past three years) making it difficult for the forest to provide the needed ecological restoration and services to the public.

Presently, the forests in the project area are spending approximately $41 million annually with revenues of $12 million. The cost of managing this area is $29 million over and above revenues produced. The highest cost in the project area is administration at 19% of the budget, fire at 17%, timber sales at 16%, and recreation at 11%.

The efficiency in use of these dollars is difficult to assess since the Forest Service is continually revamping and re-doing plans and projections that are questioned and appealed by interest groups. With budgets declining on the National Forests, enhancing or improving the habitats has become increasingly more difficult. A change in the way operations are conducted is necessary if good land stewardship is to be applied. More can be accomplished with the present budget by streamlining the public input process and requiring all interested parties to participate in the pilot project. Not participating means forgoing the opportunity to appeal and allows the project to move forward. Requiring participation will streamline the system and increase the efficiency of the process tremendously, providing for more restoration accomplishments. Managing the forest into the Historical Range of Variability will provide for long-term sustainability of the ecosystem. Using the generated revenues will reduce the cost of operations and contribute funding for additional habitat improvement projects.

The Potential Proforma for the Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust identifies revenues of over $12 million which can be used for project or management activities. It is not known whether this level of activity will address the habitat needs throughout the project area, but it is a start, and the monitoring and evaluation can begin to address the sustainability of the ecosystem and the improvements that have been made under this trust management alternative. If additional activity is deemed necessary, the revenues generated will help defray management cost and could reach a positive level depending upon the number of acres treated to reach the desired future condition.

Management

The Idaho Ecosystem Management Project was put together with many participants from all agencies and groups, so from the onset each partner would have ownership in the decision-making process. The group decisions and implementation of the process is well documented with compatible data and is a tool to engage in ecosystem management. This group consists of federal, state, industry, and foundation interest who have developed a system that can be used to truly manage using ecosystem management concepts.

In addition, the Forest Service through the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup also checked data and philosophies and social and economic considerations with an independent reviewer to further assess the validity of the process. This work is the most advanced documented ecosystem process in the country and was developed from data on the National Forest lands within the project area.

The strategy and goal is to implement ecosystem management as a planning tool and integrate the new science. A balance of biological diversity and ecosystem integrity with the social and economic objectives will develop a meaningful plan. The process involves Native Americans, the public, and the local communities to address the national issues and implement them locally. Very few initiatives even attempt to fully address the ecological objectives, at least for more than one ecological community type or a few selected species. A blend of this data and processes can begin to address the needs on our landscapes and implement effective ecosystem management.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Present management activities are far below the level of implementation to address the ecological needs of the forest. Through pre-commercial and commercial thinning, use of prescribed fire, and stream and road restoration, landscape-wide improvements can be made to maintain a healthy green forest, increase wildlife habitat, reduce wildfire losses, and protect our water resources. Our National Forest needs to treat more acres and direct management towards long-term ecosystem sustainability. It is undeniable that many natural resource advocates have come to rely on the federal process to ensure judicial scrutiny over federal agency decision-making to slow or stop resource extraction. The tremendous efforts of time, funds, and resources that go into the judicial review of federal decision-making could be more beneficial to our natural resources if these energies were re-directed in a cooperative decision-making process that would serve our environment and public assets on a national and local level.

The Central Idaho Ecosystem Trust project identified the need to implement ecosystem management on all ownership within the ecosystem. The change will be positive and must improve land stewardship and increase the net social benefits of public management to all the users of the forest. The forests will continue to be the areas the

public will seek to use for their recreational activities. Developing a new form of public involvement will bring fresh ideas to the table and replace polarization with cooperation. Local communities will benefit from the restoration activities that keep the forest healthy. The trust model can provide another tool for the management of public lands. The opportunity to monitor and evaluate the new science and processes of ecosystem management can be compared to the management plan's goals and projections. On-the-ground accomplishments can be monitored for cost effectiveness and key outcomes.

When implementing management prescriptions, different vegetational patterns will be studied and restored. The outcomes such as tree size, density, and species will be the goal, and they will be evaluated based on the Historical Range of Variability. The effects of management activities on the ecosystem and the economics will ensure the health of the land and forest in this unique composite of forest, wilderness, and recreation areas.

This project was originally submitted by Elmore, Boise, Gem, and Valley Counties and the Boise Cascade Corporation. Additionally, this project was further developed and modified with the participation and assistance of Northwest Management, Inc. and the Federal Lands Task Force Working Group.